

Policy name:	
Void Management Policy & Procedure	
Section:	Housing / Property Services
Exec responsible:	Housing and Customer Engagement Manager
Review by:	Housing and Customer Engagement Manager, Lettings Officer, Property Services Manager, H&S Lead
Resident review:	
Authority to amend:	CEO
Frequency of review:	Every Three Years
Last review:	January 2026
Next review:	January 2029
Responsibility for delivery:	
Strategy:	Housing strategy
Associated risk ID:	Risk 91: Failure by executive to manage operational aspects of the business. Risk of loss of income.
Health & safety:	Failure to complete gas and electric safety checks or carry out essential repairs would have a direct impact on the health and safety of residents.
Equality & diversity:	When dealing with tenancy terminations and lettings, consideration should be given to the individual circumstances of the residents involved.
Associated costs and value for money:	Effective handling of tenancy terminations is required to ensure that rent arrears, negative community impacts and poor property conditions are mitigated.
Associated documents:	End of tenancy survey, void monitoring form, Minimum Lettable Standards lettings policy

VERSION CONTROL			
Version number:	Sections amended:	Date of update:	Approved by:
1.0	First issue in new template	December 2013	Chief Executive
2.0	Revised in full and to incorporate Tenancy Terminations Policy	August 2017	Chief Executive
3.0	Full Review	January 2026	HB

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1. Policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- Tenancy terminations are handled appropriately.
- Rent arrears are minimised.
- Void repair costs are minimised.
- Works to properties are completed to a good standard.
- Void losses are minimised.
- A good standard of customer care is provided.
- We are making the most effective use of our housing stock.

To achieve this, we will do the following

- Follow regulation, legislation and the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- Make residents aware of their rent liabilities until the end of the tenancy.
- Attempt to complete a pre-void inspection with the resident and make it clear that the property should be returned to us in a re-let standard and what that is.
- Advise residents that they will be recharged if properties do not meet the re-let standard and recharge them where appropriate.
- Begin lettings processes as soon as practicably possible upon receiving notice.
- Let properties appropriately in accordance with our lettings policies.
- Complete inspections and work in a timely manner, scheduling work in advance where possible.
- Complete void repairs in accordance with the Minimum Lettable Standard and our agreed re-let standard.
- Complete a post-void inspection of the works to ensure the re-let standard has been met prior to letting the property.
- Complete viewings with applicants as early in the process as possible, provided it is safe and reasonable to do so.
- Make quick and appropriate decisions on the void type and future use and rent type of the property.
- Keep clear and accurate records during the void and lettings process.
- Complete satisfaction surveys with vacating and incoming residents.
- Set relevant annual performance targets and monitor progress against them.

2. Void definitions

2.1. Cornerstone categorises voids as follows:

Standard Voids

- Properties available to re-let as soon as the previous residents have vacated and only safety checks and EPC are required but otherwise meet our re-let standard.
- Properties that require some routine work to bring them back up to Cornerstone's re-let standard before they can be re-let.

New Build Voids

- Any newly built property, the void period runs from the date that the developer hands over the property to Cornerstone.

Major Works Voids

- Voids which require a higher level of repairs for the property to meet our re-let standard. Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) sets out the definition of the level of works required for it to be classified as major. It includes properties which require a new kitchen, new bathroom, new boiler or re-wire. The re-let time includes the time from the date the former tenancy ended until the property is re-let.
- Any property in need of substantial repairs where there is a lack of any main service such as gas, water or electricity supply and/or a total refit of the kitchen or bathroom or soundproofing or other major works which deem it unlettable.
- Properties which are intentionally left empty because a resident has vacated and the property is due to undergo major improvements as part of site wide scheme. Cornerstone will consider if a short-term let is feasible, depending on the time until the improvement scheme is due to commence and the cost of bringing the property up to a lettable standard.

Decant Voids

- When a major improvement scheme moves into a different area, it is necessary to keep back a certain number of voids as decant properties. As it is difficult to provide decants at the right time, it is sometimes necessary to keep units empty some months in advance of modernisation.
- A decant property will become a standard void when the decanted resident moves out, and no major work is required. The void period starts on the date the decanted resident moves out of the property.
- A decant property will become a major works void if major works or improvements are carried out before or after the decanted resident moves out. The void period starts on the date the decanted resident moves out of the property.

3. Procedure

(for the avoidance of doubt, reference to the Property Services Manager below reflects his responsibility but the day-to-day void procedure will be delegated to the Supervisor)

- 3.1 Residents must give one month's written notice to end their tenancy, and rent is payable during the period of notice.
- 3.2 When Cornerstone receives notice, a standard notification will be sent to them acknowledging receipt of their notice in their preferred method of contact. This will confirm when the keys must be returned, when the tenancy will end, details of any

- outstanding rent or other charges that need to be paid and details of an appointment for an inspection of the property.
- 3.3 The notice period may be less than one month in cases of eviction, abandonment or surrender. Authorisation to terminate a tenancy without notice from a resident should be sought from the Housing & Customer Engagement Manager or Director of Housing. In these cases, the Housing Officer / Lettings Officer will ensure the lettings process commences as early as possible to mitigate financial losses and any potential negative community impact.
 - 3.4 Details of a notice should be recorded on the CRM system (denoting the move out date) and on the Current Voids spreadsheet (see also monitoring). A written tenancy termination record should also be commenced; this will be placed in the property file once it has been re-let.
 - 3.5 The Lettings officer will identify properties suitable for conversion to affordable rent (in accordance with the current policy and HCA programme), and those that will be suitable for decant or pending major improvements and refer them to the Housing & Customer Engagement Manager for decision.
 - 3.6 Properties to be let at affordable rent or converted to affordable rent will require a new valuation. Details of the property will be passed to the Development team as soon as possible to avoid delays.
 - 3.7 The Property Services team will be notified of the forthcoming void with the termination date so that a void inspection, lock change, and gas and electrical safety check can be scheduled in. The Property Services team will arrange for the EPC to be completed.
 - 3.8 Where the property is not identified as pending major improvements or to be used as a decant the Lettings Officer will begin the letting process as soon as possible. For example, ideally it will be advertised in the next available letting cycle, but if, for some reason, it is advisable to wait for a property inspection, it should be completed as soon as possible after that date.
 - 3.9 The void supervisor will attempt to visit the property during the first two weeks of the notice period to complete the pre-void inspection and an end-of-tenancy survey with the outgoing resident. The residents' forwarding address will also be sought at this visit.
 - 3.10 A pre-void inspection form will be completed, which will identify any repairs which are Cornerstone's responsibility and any repairs, damage or neglect of the property which are the resident's responsibility to rectify before they vacate the property. The resident will be asked to sign the form, either agreeing to do the work which is their responsibility or to pay Cornerstone to do it.
 - 3.11 A copy of the pre-inspection form will be provided to the Property Services team/Lettings Officer /Customer Service Team, so that works can be scheduled and an estimated re-let time can be agreed. This will be used to assist in prioritising lettings work.

- In cases where the resident is not available to sign the inspection form, Cornerstone will send it to the resident along with the end-of-tenancy survey, where applicable. If a pre-void inspection has not taken place, a letter/email will be sent to the resident making them aware that they are at risk of a possible recharge.
- 3.12 The property should be secured, and all keys to the property must be handed back, by the resident or their representatives, to Cornerstone at Cornerstone House, Western Way, on or before the date of termination stated (unless agreed otherwise). Upon receipt, keys will be logged and a receipt given where possible. The Property Services team and Housing Officer will be notified as soon as keys are received.
 - 3.13 On the day of the resident leaving Cornerstone's property, all our records must be updated in accordance with our data retention policy. All end of tenancy survey data will be recorded.
 - 3.14 The Property Services Team will aim to carry out a lock change and an inspection of the property within one working day of the keys being returned. A void inspection form will be completed to confirm if the property meets our re-let standard. If it doesn't meet the standard, repair orders will be raised for the required works in addition to the standard gas and electric safety checks and EPC. The void inspection needs to be copied to Lettings Officer and CSA team.
 - 3.15 Keys for properties must be signed for when taking them out of the office and returning them. For standard and major works voids a key safe may be used to minimise delays.
 - 3.16 The Property Services Team will aim to inform the Lettings Officer of the expected re-let date within 2 working days of the property becoming void.
 - 3.17 Voids with no works, other than safety checks and EPC, will aim to be handed back to the Housing Team for re-letting within 3 working days of the property becoming void.
 - 3.18 Voids with standard works, will aim to be handed back to the Housing team for re-letting within 15 working days.
 - 3.19 Voids with major works will require additional liaison with the Housing Team, a further visit may be required to arrange a schedule of repairs and timescale for the works to be completed. In certain cases where the cost of repair is high, the Lettings Officer will consult with the Housing & Customer Engagement Manager. An expected re-let date will be agreed, and the Property Services Team will keep the Housing Team updated regarding progress.
 - 3.20 All works to the property will be in accordance with the Minimum Lettable Standard with the express aim of the property meeting the agreed re-let standard.
 - 3.21 Should the property not be suitable to let (e.g. where there are substantial repairs), the property will be listed as a Major Works void, subject to agreement by the Housing & Customer Engagement Manager or Director of Housing. A programme of works will be agreed and drawn up.

- 3.22 Shortlisting of suitable applicants will be completed the day following the closure of the advert cycle. Home verification calls should be completed within 5 working days of shortlisting. All letting activities will be completed in accordance with the Lettings Policy, the Choice Based Lettings Policy, and the Lettings officer should aim to have made an offer to the suitable applicant on the day that the property becomes void. Exceptions may apply when there has been an eviction or abandonment, and the notice is shorter.
- 3.23 The Lettings Officer should be clear with applicants about required response times to contact and realistic about lettings dates, but sensitive to the individual needs of the applicants.
- 3.24 Viewings for properties can be completed during the period of void repairs to minimise re-let times, provided it is safe to do so, and the property is in a condition that would not deter a potential applicant. This will be particularly relevant where the property may be expected to be difficult to let or where the property is adapted.
- 3.25 The Property Services Team will complete a post void inspection upon completion of the works to ensure that the property meets our re-let standard prior to the new resident signing up.
- 3.26 In some properties there will be items that have been provided in addition to our normal re-let standard, for example washer driers on new build properties with limited drying facilities.
- 3.27 All records should be updated as soon as practicable after a new tenancy commences.

4. Resident improvements

- 4.1 The right of residents to be compensated for improvements will only have bearing on the matter if the resident has followed the correct procedure applying for permission. (Refer to "Right to Improve Policy" for detailed notes).
- 4.2 In general, it is agreed that if they pass the safety check, small items, such as extra lights, sockets etc., may be left. In the case of larger items, the following applies:
- *Coloured Bathroom Suites* - These will be left, but Cornerstone has no obligation to match the colour if replacing a single item.
 - *Doors and kitchen units* - Provided that they are satisfactory, they will be left. If single units need replacing, Cornerstone may not match it exactly.
 - *Conservatories and Porches / Garden alterations* - These will be looked at individually.

- *Gas Fires* - If the outgoing resident has their own gas fire, they will be asked to remove it. Cornerstone will provide an alternative heat source
- *Showers* – Where not the property of Cornerstone, the vacating resident can either leave the shower in situ, provided it meets current safety regulations, or they can remove it and make good. Where it doesn't meet safety regulations, residents' will be expected to remove it and make good, or they will be recharged.
- *Adaptations* - If level access showers and other adaptations have been installed, every effort will be made to find a suitable resident who has a need for the adaptations. However, it may be necessary to remove the shower and replace with a bath in the case of a difficult to let unit. This will be agreed between the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager and Property Services Manager.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 There is a weekly meeting between the Housing Team, Property Services team and a report is passed to Executive team.
- 5.2 The Housing Officer should flag up potential and actual issues to the Housing and Customer Engagement Manager, which may impact upon the void management and achievement of targets.
- 5.3 Targets are set and reviewed annually for re-let times, void loss, void costs and resident satisfaction. Performance against these targets is reviewed regularly by the Senior Management Team, Board and Resident Engagement Panel.